

What is claimed is:

1. A method of providing secure access to a service on a web server to each of a plurality of recipients of an electronic message comprising:

(a) facilitating automatic creation of a first electronic message directed to the plurality of recipients by a first user, wherein said first electronic message comprises a permission to access the service based on a public key of each recipient and is signed with a digital signature of the first user;

(b) automatically creating from said first electronic message a plurality of electronic messages each comprising a copy of the first electronic message;

(c) distributing one of the plurality of electronic messages to each of the plurality of recipients;

(d) receiving from at least one of the plurality of recipients one of the plurality of electronic messages;

(e) automatically verifying the digital signature of the first user in the received electronic message by the web server;

(f) providing access to the service if step (e) produces a positive result.

2. A system for providing secure access to a service on a web server to each of a plurality of recipients of an electronic message comprising:

a message transfer system that facilitates automatic creation of a first electronic message directed to the plurality of recipients by a first user, wherein said first electronic message comprises a permission to access the service based on a public key of each recipient and is signed with a digital signature of the first user; that automatically creates from said first electronic message a plurality of electronic messages each comprising a copy of the first

electronic message; and that distributes one of the plurality of electronic messages to each of the plurality of recipients; and

the web server that receives from at least one of the plurality of recipients one of the plurality of electronic messages; that automatically verifies the digital signature of the first user in the received electronic message; and that provides access to the service if the verification produces a positive result.

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